

KAMWE (HIGGI) ORIGIN(S), MIGRATION(S) AND SETTLEMENT

BAZZA, Michael Boni

*Department of History and International Relations
Veritas University Abuja (The Catholic University of Nigeria)*

&

Prof. KANU Ikechukwu Anthony

*Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies
Tansian University, Umunya*

Abstract

The concept of 'genesis' or 'origin' in history has given rise to several schools of thought each seeking to provide a framework through which the origin of people could be meaningfully examined. These include the Diffusionist, Anti-Diffusionist, Procreationist, and Evolutionist schools of thought. This paper therefore, examines each of these schools with a view to situating Kamwe (Higgi) origin(s) migration(s) and settlement patterns in their proper historical perspectives. An analysis of the aforementioned schools of thought reveal that the Kamwe (Higgi) people fit more adequately within the framework of the Evolutionist school of thought which maintains that socio-cultural affinities emerging from shared historical experience over time, constitute the bedrock for understanding the origins of people. Oral traditions and opinions of elders from the field of research convey the fact that the people who today answer to the designation 'Kamwe or Higgi' were in the earliest times, a collection of small socio-cultural units of the Sukur, the Marghi and Fali; essentially, they inhabit modern day Michika, Madagali and Mubi North Local Government Areas and indeed, the Mandara Mountains' range lying immediately aside the Nigeria-Cameroun border. However, over time, these socio-cultural units coalesced by sheer forces of history such as wars, inter-marriage, trade and commerce and subsequently developed a number of shared cultural characteristics which today distinguish them as member of a common nation. To elucidate this position, the paper further, examines the views of Kamwe (Higgi) elders in order to recapture briefly, how they in turn see their past as they relate to their own myths of origin(s) migration(s) and settlement which is the subject-matter of this research paper.

Keywords: Myths, Origins, Migrations, Settlement patterns, Kamwe

Introduction

The concept of historical origins of people lends itself to a variety of interpretations. For some people for instance, origin signifies a given geographical location. For others, it connotes the beginning of a civilization, culture or an epoch in history. The Kamwe, like other ethnic groups in Nigeria, claim eastern origin. Oral tradition indicates that the people migrated from Nchokyili in the present day Republic of Cameroon. According to this tradition, it was in Nchokyili that the people moved to settle in their present geographical location. It is said that the Kamwe left Nchokyili together with other ethnic groups such as Sukur, Marghi, Fali, Holma and Yungur.

In this tradition of origin, we are not told when the people left Nchokyili, nor are we given the reasons for their migration. However, according to Baba Maduwa, the Kamwe came from Egypt and first settled at Mokolo presently located in Cameroon very close to the border between Nigeria and Cameroon.¹Note that the Mokolo in Cameroon is different from Mukula (the spiritual centre of the Kamwe) in Dakwa-Bazza, Nigeria.

In view of the above fact, this research concentrates on the tradition of origin of Kamwe people, their migration and founding of settlements. The investigations point out to the works of J. P. Dada, Z. M. Mangoro and J. J. Williams who collectively contend that "...the people left their original homeland in the kingdom of Kush to escape population pressure, famines, scarcity of land or political oppression to find independence and arable land elsewhere".²As the Kamwe race departed the kingdom of Kush, however, over time, these socio-cultural units coalesced by sheer forces of history such as wars, inter-marriage, trade and commerce and subsequently developed a number of shared cultural characteristics which today distinguish them as member of a common nation.³

The Kamwe people settled down in their present geographical location at Nkafa (Michika) and Dakwa (Bazza) which are considered as the two main clusters of the Kamwe nation.⁴And this happened through gradual movements along the plains of the Mandara Mountains' range.

The historical origin of the Kamwe

The Kamwe myths of origin are many and varied. Historically, they are people from the Nubian region in the present day Sudan, who migrated

to Chad region for one migratory reason or the other.⁵ They finally moved to a more secured abode in the Mountains where they set up a ruling dynasty at Sukur on the present day hills of Madagli along the Mandara range.⁶ Before this paper debates whether this myth does or does not measure to the historical empirical evidence on ground that stands up to the test of socio political objectivity. It is fundamentally important to examine the above in the context of several schools of thought that have risen in contemporary scholarships to address complex situation of this nature. These are:

The Diffusionist

This school ascribes to groups or peoples' places of origin usually outside their present abode. A few examples of scholars who uphold this position in their works on various Nigerian groups will help shed light on the issue. These scholars include Biobaku, Aye and Talbot.⁷

Biobaku is concerned with the Yoruba whose origin he seeks to unravel. He settles for an "eastern interpretation" of the origin of the Yoruba after an assessment of what in his view, constitutes the limitations of the myriad of other theories on Yoruba origin.

He sees resemblances between Yoruba and ancient Egyptian culture in religious observances, works of art, burial and other customs as evidence in support of the view that the Yoruba are likely to have come from the "East". He contends specially that in ceremonies as in the veneration of gods, the Yoruba cultural ethos derive their antecedents from Nubian or Meroitic civilizations.⁸

Aye, on his own part, is an uncompromising apostle of Egyptian origin of the Efik. He clings tenaciously to this view for a number of reasons: First, He asserts that the ancient Egyptians as the Efik believe strongly in the transmigration of the soul, a fact that is aptly demonstrated in the rich, complex and ritualistic paraphernalia that attends the interment of their kings and noblemen. Secondly, the Efik as the Egyptians observe an elaborate custom of mourning their dead for an interminable period; circumcise both sexes for purpose of purity and undertake a biennial purgation of their entire community in the manner of the Passover celebration reminiscent of ancient Egyptian and Jewish rites. Third, the Efik's worship of Ndem is akin to the Egyptian worship of the goddess Isis. Finally, the Efik language and personal names, in his view, have close

affinity with those of Pharaonic Egypt.⁹

Based on these factors, he maintains that the Efik could have come from nowhere else other than Egypt. He therefore, dismisses the view of those scholars who propose an Ibo or Ibibio origin for the Efik, arguing that the Efik only passed through these territories in the course of their migrations from Egypt.¹⁰

The Diffusionist school has been a subject of intense criticisms. The reasons for this are not far-fetched. First, it has been argued that it is largely influenced by the

Hamithic Hypothesis which strives to interpret all positive developments in Africa to alien influence of "Hamithic aristocrats".¹¹ Second, it does not consider the fact that similarity in cultural pattern does not necessarily betray common origin of people, since the possibility of independent or parallel development is a common feature of global historical process.¹² Finally, the diffusionist school has been shown to be an avenue through which some writers, out of religious influence, prestige or patriotism seek to link the origin of people to centres of Islam, Christianity and secular civilization which the Orient generally represents.¹³

The anti-Diffusionist school

As the name implies, this school arose as a reaction to the views expressed by the Diffusionist. It posits that groups or peoples owe their origin to places around their present abode. Obayemi and Greenberg are amongst scholars who uphold this position for most Nigeria groups.

Obayemi is of the view that the Yoruba have no business searching for their origin in the Orient. He maintains that, besides the facts that the source-material on which the oriental origin of the Yoruba is based is highly "Islamized" and therefore, considerably distorted, the etymological arguments used to back up this claim do not stand up on any degree of scientific scrutiny.¹⁴ Indeed, for him, linguistic and archaeological finding have more than shown that vast population of peoples have settled in the area presently occupied by the Yoruba for several thousands of years.¹⁵ But even more importantly, it has been demonstrated that these populations appear to have characteristics that are physically and culturally akin to its present Yoruba inhabitants. These findings, according to him, show that the Yoruba could have come from

nowhere else.¹⁶

Greenberg, in his own analysis asserts that none of the Nigerian groups speak a hermitic language and it would therefore be unreasonable for any group to claim a Hermitic origin.¹⁷ For instance, he maintains that Yoruba, Idoma, Igbo, Nupe, Epira and Gbari form a cluster of languages within the larger Kwa group, centered largely in the area of the Niger-Benue confluence.¹⁸ The fact that, there has been a steady process of population expansion and cultural differentiation in this area, thousands of years ago suggests a historical interpretation to this. Therefore, it would be illusory looking for the origin of any of the aforementioned groups elsewhere.¹⁹

The Anti-diffusionist school is not without its own share of criticisms. Scholars in this group have been generally criticized by Diffusionist for what is perceived as their “unwillingness” to dig deep enough into the past in order to unravel the strong Middle Eastern influence discernible in the peopling of most parts of Africa and the civilizations which its peoples currently exhibit. One of these critics argues for instance, that the disintegration of the Egyptian Kingdoms and Civilizations, occasioned a mass exodus of peoples, some of whom account for the growth of some West Africa societies.²⁰

The Procreationist school of thought

This school upholds that biological procreation is the basis for the genesis of peoples or groups. Put differently, this school posits that any given nation is a product of the reproductory energies of a “man and woman” from where all its component units ultimately derive.²¹ The Lamurudu and Bayajidda theories of Yoruba and Hausa origin(s) respectively, are classic example of this school of thought.²² An explanation of these theories will help drive home our point.

The Lamurudu theory asserts that the Yoruba sprang from Lamururu, one of the kings of Mecca and “father” of Oduduwa, progenitor of all Yoruba people. Oduduwa was forced out of Mecca by civil disturbances which arose out of his religious perversity. This claim was said to be typified in his practice of idol of Mecca. He was to later settle at Ile-Ife where he died, but not before he had given birth to Okanbi, who also died, leaving behind him seven princes and princesses from whom sprang the various “tribes” of the Yoruba nation. These include Olowu, ancestor of the Owu; Alaketu, the progenitor of the Ketu people; Orangun, king of Ila;

Onisabe, king of the Sabe; Olupopo, king of the Popo; and Oranyan, progenitor of the Oyo.²³

The Bayajidda theory or legend of Hausa origin, on the other hand, relates how a certain Bayajidda journeyed from Baghdad to Kanem Bornu where the Mai gave him his daughter in marriage. However, events soon forced Bayajidda to leave Bornu, but not without his wife, whom he left at Biram to bear him a son on his way to Gaya, near Kano. From here, he moved to a town whose people were deprived of water from a well by a sacred snake, called Sarki. Bayajidda killed the snake and in gratitude, Daura, Queen of the town offered herself in marriage to him. The product of their marriage was a son called Bawo who had seven children. They became the eponymus founders of the Hausa States namely, Biram, Daura, Katsina, Zaria, Kano, Rano and Gobir.²⁴

The Procreationist school has come under criticism from scholars who perceive a strong religious influence in its logic. They argue that this school is inspired by dogmatic religious creation stories which emphasizes the principle of “a first man and woman from whom all creation derived” - a principle which lacks a convincingly scientific explanatory model.²⁵

The Evolutionist school of thought

Scholars in this group assert that it is through the interaction and intermingling of different people in the past through migrations, military conquests or trade, that the Foundation of nations are laid down.²⁶ An analysis of the aforementioned schools of thought reveal that the Kamwe people fit more adequately within the framework of the Evolutionist school of thought which maintains that socio-cultural affinities emerging from shared historical experience over time, constitute the bedrock for understanding the origins of people.²⁷

However, to elucidate this position, the paper further, examines the views of Kamwe elders in order to recapture briefly, how they in turn see their past as they relate to their own myths of origin(s) migration(s) and settlement which is the subject-matter of this seminar paper.

About origin and location

The Kamwe are the group of people who occupy the central slopes of the Mandara Mountains in the central and Western part of Africa. The ancestral land of the Kamwe people stretches from Mubi in the Southern axis of Mandara Mountains to Shuwa and Koppa in Madagali Local Government Area of Adamawa State, Nigeria to the North. Westwards, it extends from Samuwa in Lassa and Askira-Uba Local Government Areas of Borno State. The Kamwe nation also extends as far as Magode and Rhumisiki towns in the East of the Republic of Cameroon.²⁸

The ancestral land of the Kamwe people lies between:

Latitude	10.6216	Longitude	13.3897	Altitude (feet)	1702
Lat (DMS)	10° 37 18N	Long (DMS)	13° 23' 23E	Altitude (meters)	518

In terms of land mass, the Kamwe inhabits an area of about 2714.6 square Kilometers (KM). In diameter, it is approximately 56.32KM from Lassa to Magode from the west to east. It is also about 48.2KM from Koppa/Shuwa to Ghye (Zha).²⁹ The Kamweland like other parts of Central Nigeria and Northern Cameroon is located in the Sudan Savanna.³⁰ The Sudan is a broad belt of tropical Savannah that runs east and west across the African Continent, from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Ethiopian highlands in the east.³¹ The Sahel, a belt of drier grasslands and acacia Savanna, lies to the north, between the Sudan Savanna and the Sahara Desert. To the south, the forest-savanna mosaic is a transition zone between the Sudan Savanna and the Guinean moist forests and Congolian forests that lie nearer the equator.³²

The kamweland as part of the Sudan Savanna has a tropical climate with warm to hot temperatures throughout the year. The temperature drops to between 10^c to 28^c between the months of November to February. The average rainfall in Kamweland is about 2000mm.³³ As in other parts of the Sudan Savanna, the rain falls between April and October. Due to the effect of desertification, the rains are increasingly destructive with sand storms, wirl-winds and floods.³⁴ Many streams and rivers run through Kamweland. Amongst the notable rivers are Yedseram and its tributaries like Wathara, Delchim, Thlali and Ngripa with varieties of aquatic organisms.³⁵

Early migration and settlement

The history of the Kamwe people seems to be almost erased from living memory prior to their settlement at Nchokyili in the present day Southern Cameroon.³⁶ What are probably found are allusions in folk stories and myth with little clues to the history of origin of the Kamwe. However, it can be traced as far back as the Biblical events of the tower of Babel as recorded in the Sacred Scriptures.³⁷ According to the story, a united humanity in the generations following the Great Flood, spoke a single language and migrated eastward to the land of Shinar. But following the rebellion at Babel, language came into existence within unique culture and racial peculiarities.³⁸ From thence, every human race has had their starting point of origin from that pandemonium at the tower of Babel. Indeed, it was humanity's attempt to build the tower of Babel that marked the beginning of languages and or tribes.

Myth

By way of overview, it is important to note from the onset that, Kamwe is one ethnic group that is yet to develop and document an agreed history. Their history is scantily recorded in various writing and authoritative works on them hardly exist in whatever form until in the 1990s. As a matter of fact, the co-author's B.S.T. Thesis submitted to Urbanian Pontifical University, Rome in 1994 entitled: "The Impact of Christianity on the Traditional Structures of the Higgi People of Adamawa State" was considered an epoch making piece of research work on Kamwe. Before then, there were just poorly constructed and fragmented stories collected in different forms by students of tertiary institutions as research papers and projects in addition to few references in some books written by visiting missionaries. This lack of intense historico-ethnographical research works on the Kamwe could be as a result of their late access to Western education which came to them via the missionaries in the 1940s or as a result of sustained Fulani suppression from as early as 1828.³⁹

The Kamwe nation

In talking about the Kamwe nation, it should be noted that the term, nation, as a concept has remained a subject of intense academic debate. For instance, while Kedourie sees a nation as "...a body of people to whom a government is responsible through their legislature; any corpus of people associating together and deciding on a scheme for their own

government...,"⁴⁰ Rotberg, on his own part, conceives of a nation as a definite territory that is inhabited by a people who possess a distinctive common culture and language and who feel that they constitute a nation.⁴¹ A plethora of other distinctive definitions such as these, makes it imperative for the term to be contextually defined in any setting in which it is applied. Accordingly, by nation, reference is here being made to any group whose constituent elements share particularly substantial relationships in history, culture, and language in such a way that a unique identity is thus created that distinguishes it from other groups. Following from this definition, we have in isolating the aforementioned groups as belonging to a common Kamwe nation, adopted the following criteria: unanimity of theories of origin, uniformity of cultural patterns and linguistic unity.

Theories of origin (Bazza-Dakwa) cluster

The history of the origin of Bazza clan can be traced to Nchokyili and then Kirawa in the Cameroon Republic like other clans of Kamwe.⁴² In the history of Kamale clan, (Ka Wsteka), we read that Kamale and Bazza (Dakwa) are brothers. They left Nchokyili in search of farmland. They travelled southwards across the Mandara Mountains. They came to one of the spurs of the Mandara Mountains called Sukur. Here we do not know whether Bazza people first went across Sukur before Sukur people came and settled or the Sukur people were there before the Bazza people came. It might also be that they came together as one group.⁴³ The Bazza people favour this statement that they were in one group, but the Sukur people are against this version.

The people of Sukur say that from the beginning when they were still at Nchokyili, there was enmity between them and the people of Kamale (of whom the people of Bazza were part). But Bazza people say that when the father of the Bazza people decided to leave Sukur, he told one of his cousins to remain at Sukur. This person, according to Catechist Tsandukwa is the father of all the people of Sukur.⁴⁴

Account by Kamwe elders suggest that at Kamale, the group of Bazza people stayed for many years. They were all together known as the people of Kamale. The farmland however, became exhausted and there was famine. The father of Bazza people and his group went to the south from mountain to mountain because of fear. They came to the Futu

Mountain. They wanted to settle there but due to the lack of drinking water and flat land for farming they left. From Futu, they did not stop until they came to Mukula Mountain which is the spiritual centre of Bazza.⁴⁵ There, they settled on this mountain. Later on some of their relatives from Kamale, Sukur and Nchokyili followed their route until they came and joined them at Mukula.

When the Bazza people arrived on the top of Mukula Mountain, they found a valley with a stream of water, a forest and wild fruit trees. They found the ground to be suitable for farming and grazing. There were many animals also for hunting. The Bazza people settled here. They planted some of the crops that they had brought along with them. Their farm products did well and their animals increased in size and number. They became very prosperous and they enjoyed this place very well.⁴⁶ But after some years the forest was cleared, the land became exhausted and they once again found themselves in a difficult situation. When the land of Mukula was exhausted, the Bazza people came down to the foot of the mountain to plant their crops. They came to the foot of the mountain for farming but they continued to live on Mount Mukula.⁴⁷

The tradition of origin of Michika (Mwecika) settlement

Michika is the largest Local Government Area and town of the Kamwe people in present day Nigeria.⁴⁸ The name Michika is a bastardized version of the real name Mwecika. The original name of Michika is "Mwe-cika" meaning, "creeping in silently from the hill". It originated from the original phrase being "Mwe-cha cika Ra Kwada Kwakwa."⁴⁹ Meaning, the hills where Kwada Kwakwa usually creep silently to hunt! Due to the various reports of European travelers such as Henrich Barth and the Chronicles of Mai Idris Aloomo, the Colonialists assumed that Mwecika is Michika. Henrich Barth in his book 'Travels and Discoveries in North and central Africa' referred to Michika as 'Mechika' while "Mai Idris Aloomo of Bornu, 1571-1583,⁵⁰ on his part as well referred to Michika as Mishiga along with other places called Gamargu, Marghi, Kochi, Mishiga and N'garasa.⁵¹ Furthermore, many people have assumed the name Michika is a Hausa word for "we are full or we are complete" (Mu chika).⁵²

Kwada Kwakaa the founder of Mwe-cika (Michika) was said to be a prolific hunter whom legend said could hunt 'Liveri le Pekye' lions and leopards by himself. From time to time, he came down to the present

‘Mwere Mwe-Ci-Ka’ (Michika hills) to set his traps and hunt games “cika tyi”.⁵³ That is on those hills above Karayanga, where Central Primary School Michika is located today.

One day Kwada Kwakaa was said to have been sighted on the present Michika (Mwecika) hills by one mde Ka-ligyi. The mde Ka-ligyi was said to have gone back to Nkafamiya to tell Mbege (the King) that he saw his son Kwada Kwakaa. On another day, Kwada again left Nkafamiya and came down to the Mwecika hills as usual to check his trap (Ngaa). Kwada tarried a while and did not go back to Nkafamiya on time. Hence, his father began to ask “Kawa Kwada ri mbele ra?” which literally translates to: “where is Kwada my people?” The answer he was given was: “Kwada li dzigwa kaa cika thleshie dewa wuna”; meaning, “Kwada has gone to the hills down to hunt as usual.”⁵⁴

Hence, the story goes that whenever Kwada was not seen in Nkafamiya, it was always said that he has gone to ‘mwe lwa kaa cika thli.’ From thence, ‘Kwakaa’ stuck to kwada’s name. The name Michika (Mwecika) evolved from ‘Mwe ccha cika ra Kwada’.⁵⁵ Based on this story, Kwada Kwakaa was accredited the founder of Michika town. According to “shi mairama Wape and Tumba ra Dalive in Nkafamiya, Kwada Kwakaa’s father was the Mbege (king) in Nkafamiya. Historical estimate put the period at about 16th century. The Mbege had twelve boys from two wives. Kwada was the eighth child from the second wife of Mbege.⁵⁶ The mention of Mishiga (Michika) in the odyssey of Mai Idris of Bornu, 1571-1583 underscores the fact that Kwada Kwakaa might have founded Michika (Mwecika) in the fifteenth-century and not sixteenth as suggested by other authors.⁵⁷

The myth of origin (Nkafa-Michika) Tili cluster

A popular legend among the Kamwe goes thus: God created the heaven and the world. He lived in the heaven but the world was empty. After many years, woman was first created by God. God saw from heaven that woman was very lonely. He came down and asked the woman to go to heaven to live together with him. The woman refused saying that she preferred to live in the world rather than go to heaven to live with God. Of course, she had much trouble. She had nobody to converse with, she slept on grass under a big tree, and she had to live on roots and fruits of trees. However, God did not force the woman to go and live with him, but

instead he made the woman to become his wife. He always came down and slept with her. The woman gave birth to ten children, five boys and five girls. God came down and made shelter for his children, he also came with food for them. When the children were still young, God told the woman that he would take the children and would rear them in heaven together with him. The woman refused saying that none of her children would go to heaven. She said that the world belonged to her and the heaven belonged to God, therefore, her children would remain in the world to multiply and fill the world. God then asked her to divide the children between them. He would put his share in another part of the world. To this, the woman agreed. She took three boys and two girls and gave them to God and she had two boys and three girls for herself. She took more females for she knew that males do not give birth. God received his share, the three boys and two girls. He went away to a different part of the world with these five children. He blessed them with many good things that he refused to the children taken by the woman.⁵⁸

The place where the woman lived is believed to be *Nchokyili* which is known as Godili in the Cameroon Republic.⁵⁹ All the people of the world came from this woman who lived in *Nchokyili*. The children of God were blessed with many good things including the power to rule the children of the woman. But to the children of the woman God gave axes, hoes and sickles for tilling the ground. Thus, even today, it is a popular conception that the Kamwe should be farmers and the Fulani should be the herders.⁶⁰

The Meaning of Ghumci

The people of Metla came from Sukur in a group. On their way to Metla some of them settled at Mogodi and the rest proceeded to Nkala. When they came to Nkala, they settled and increased in number. They had three groups: Tizhe, Zirra and Tumba. The group of Tizhe stayed at Nkala but the group of Zirra and Tumba went to Metla and Ghumci respectively. Before the groups of Zirra and Tumba left, they called on the one who was the high priest to divide the family properties as there were two sacred stones called birth stones. The high priest put one of the sacred stones among the smallest part and the other stone in the second to the smallest part, thus, the biggest part had no birth stone. The three groups were called to make the choice. The group of Tizhe being the eldest group, was asked to make his choice first. The group took the biggest part, and the group of Zirra and Tumba had to take the smaller portions. The group

of Tumba who took the smallest portion became angry with the rest of his brothers. When he came to Ghumci he said, "Good-bye forever", to his brothers.⁶¹ And this is the meaning of Ghumci.

The group of Tumba who stayed at Ghumci, cut themselves completely from the rest of his brothers. Even during the time of war, the group of Tumba got no help either from Tizhe or Zirra. However, Tumba was able to drive the people of Kamwendiva away from the present area of Ghumci. The people of Kamwendiva went towards northwest and settled. In order to support this claims, Baba Maduwa Bode said that the name Michika (Nkafa), Bazza (Dakwa), Mukula and Kapsiki were derived from Nchokyili.⁶² Nevertheless, he did not categorically tell us whether Egypt was the original homeland of the Kamwe people. However, from every impression and indication, Kamwe people came from the east. They were probably among the Hyksos that ruled Egypt for a hundred years.⁶² They entered Egypt at the invitation of Joseph probably near the end of the 18th century B.C where they lived for 430 years after which they receive oppression and slavery.⁶³ This was when the Egyptians took over their leadership and sent Jews out of Egypt. Some however remained in Egypt while others followed other places. The Kamwe traveled and once stayed in a town called Frulomi in Ethiopia, Empire of Kush, which was believed to be part of Sudan and Ethiopia.⁶⁴

The Kamwe-Nchokyili Nexus

While this researcher has made every effort to identify the centrality of Nchokyili in Kamwe history as regards its origin and place, what seems to be constant however, is the lack of consensus among the Kamwe clusters.⁶⁵ Some trace it to the Middle East while others locate it in the present day Cameroon. Nevertheless, what is evidently clear is the fact that the real name is Gudili and the name of the chief priest who also doubles as the king is Nchokyili.⁶⁶ As a king, Nchokyili has all the attributes of the Supreme Being that is Omni Potent, Omni Science and Omni Present.

Kamwe and her neighbours

a. The Sukur

Numerically it is the smallest of the Chadic speaking nations. Historically, it is perhaps the most important. The Kamwe trace their myth of origin to Sukur, where they settled for a very long time and established a ruling

dynasty. Today a visit to Sukur kingdom is an unforgettable experience. It is strongly believed up to today that in the olden days, the king wields immense influence as the supreme repository of spiritual and dynastic authority where he was considered to be a kind of divine incarnation. The royal enclosure and other historical buildings in Sukur is been declared by UNESCO as a heritage site.⁶⁷ Every year, tourists troop to the village located in Madagali Local Government Area of Adamawa State for site seeing. The village itself is only accessed by a 'three kilometers long' stone paved pathways. The pathway has a huge monoliths starting from the entrance to the royal compound.

Sukur kingdom probably exerted its greatest influence and power before the rise of the Mandara Empire in the seventeenth century. Today, Sukur people have settled in the plains around Gulak and their descendants now identify themselves as Marghi people.

b. The Marghi

They inhabit the Yedzeram valley after the evacuation of the Batta. They trace their legend of migration to the East. Those who inhabit Uba, claim a Pabir origin; the Wamdeo lineages are very mixed in Huyum, Yaffa and Lassa. The predominant clans of the Marghi around these places are Mamza and Gadzama. With its strong Muslim Kanuri influence at Duhu and Gulak, the Marghi stock has coalesced with the immigrants from Gudur in the French Cameroon, while at Bazza (which in Pre-Fulani times was an important Marghi center), they had been invaded and largely replaced by the Mandara Kamwe who today identify themselves as A'dakwa.

c. The Fali

The Fali believe that their ancestor came from Mokolo in the present day Cameroon Republic. They followed the hilltops of the Mandara range and settled southwards in Mukula (the spiritual centre of Bazza), until finally all the Fali people of Kiriya, Muvidi Vimtim, Bahuli, Muchalla, Bavige and Bahuli were established. At this juncture, it could be speculated that the resultant socio-political upheaval caused by the conquest of Pulthukumu created a chain reaction among the Mukula ruling families necessitated this migration. This socio-political upheaval can be equated with the experience of the Marghi in Kamweland. The Marghi, according to Kirk-Greene, were invaded from the East by the Kamwe who eventually occupied the central Massifs of the Mandara range, after driving the Marghi away from their habitation in the western slope.⁶⁸ To

justify this ancestral link to the Sukur, Marghi, Fali and Kamwe, the pre-colonial Fali people looked on to the Mukula's chief priest for intervention wherever there was a disagreement. Similarly, their chiefs assumed authority and power only after the approval of the chief priest of Mukula. In fact, the Fali myth of origin holds that their ancestors came from Mukula. Like the Kamwe, the Fali people are divided into Mugilu, Miza, Mukta and Zaa, kiriya and Muchalla groups. Linguistically, the mugilu, Miza and Kiriya seem to stand as a bridge between the south Eastern Kamwe and the Muchalla people. At any rate, one thing to bear in mind is that, whatever their linguistic and cultural differences, the various Kamwe and Fali clans regard themselves as one people having common ancestors.⁶⁹

In the past, because of this consanguinity, there were no wars between the Fali and Kamwe involving dangerous weapons like knives, spears, arrows etc, but only stick. Dangerous weapons were reserved for wars with the Fulani and Germans.⁷⁰ The act of using sticks to fight their close neighbours is still being practiced among the Kamwe even today and it is called 'Mpar-Zama',⁷¹ meaning fighting a brother or relative.

The Kamwe/Igbo Connection

Bar. Iliya Y. Kwache in his own analysis gave a captivating resemblance between the socio-economic and religious life of the Kamwe and the Igbo people of eastern Nigeria. According to him, with improvement in transport and technology, many Kamwe people have taken to commercial activities. In fact, many literatures and texts have described the Kamwe people as the 'Igbo' of Northern Nigeria.⁷² This is because of the enterprising and industrious nature of the Kamwe people. The Igbo people referred to are one of the dominant ethnic groups in Nigeria with an estimated total population of 32 million native Igbo speakers in 2014.⁷³ They are famous for trade, commerce, education and exploration. They are reputed to be at the vanguard of industrial development of Nigeria and known for their knack for innovation and fabrication of tools. Many texts and literature have recorded that in all the recognized 196 countries in the world, an Igbo man or woman will be living there.⁷⁴

In fact, there is a popular saying in Nigeria that any town or city without an Igbo man is a cursed town. Equating the Kamwe people with the Igbo people therefore cannot be farfetched. The Igbo and Kamwe people share

many similarities culturally, socially and even religiously. In an article published in the Sunday Trust Newspaper of Sunday 7th July, 2013, one Usman Kundili Bukar of the University of Maiduguri said this about the Kamwe people of Michika (Mwecika):

The principal tribe in Michika is the Kamwe otherwise known as 'Higgi'. However, the indigenes of this town are generally referred to as michika, (sic) (apparently referring to the Kamwe language, with Michika in Adamawa State as their largest town.) Although a minority tribe in the country, the Kamwe people are popular and famous for their participation in trading, hence regarded as one of the finest in that aspect. If there is anything that has made the people of Michika well known and recognized in the country, it is their strong entrepreneurial spirit, which is only similar to that of the Igbos a tribe generally known for their zeal in business. In whatever field you find them, they have a history and record of bravery, commitment and dedication. It is as a result of the vision, aspiration, spirit and culture of entrepreneurship that the grounds for comparison are laid between the Igbo of the south-east and the (Kamwe) 'higgi' of the North-eastern part of Nigeria which has given birth to the common name "Michikawa Inyamiren Arewa" which means "Igbos of the North".⁷⁵

The description above is true of the kamwe people of North Eastern Nigeria as it true of the Igbo of south Eastern Nigeria. Apart from the acumen of the Kamwe people and Igbo people for business and enterprise, they also have a great knack for education and exploring new frontiers. There is arguably a Kamwe man and woman in all big towns and cities in Nigeria today involved in all forms of businesses such as a provision store retailer, baker, cobbler or even as farmers like their Igbo counterpart.

The Kamwe like the Igbo people also operate a caste system. The Kamwe believe in God known as Hyalatomwe. The Igbo believes in God referred to 'Chukwu' or 'Chineke'. Before the advent of the missionaries, the Kamwe and Igbo were polygamous societies. Both were republican societies but still showed respect to their elders. Most of the Igbo and Kamwe people embraced the Christian faith, which has affected their culture radically.⁷⁶

Summary and Conclusion

From the general accounts, we have seen the historical tie among the indigenous central Chadic communities. The Kilba's claims their origin as Marghi groups that moved South wards to the hills and the Fali and Kamwe, and how this tie is respected even till today by both groups. In the course of this study of the origin, migration and settlement patterns of the Kamwe in particular and the neighbouring Chadic communities in general, the paper tried to emphasize such common factors using the Kamwe, Marghi, Fali and Sukur to illustrate the point being discussed. Kamwe were said to have had a strong dynasty in Nchokyili where the king was seen as an intermediary between God and the world of Kamwe. The research found out that till this present day, people in that part of Cameroon speak the same language (vecemwe) with those in Michika of Adamawa, Nigeria, and not only do they speak the same language, but also most of their cultural practices are similar especially in terms of festivities. "The Kapsiki of Cameroon and Kamwe of Nigeria are the same ethnic groups which are split into smaller socio-cultural units populating the inaccessible hillsides of the Mandara range.

It was noted that the movement of these ethnic groups from Nchokyili was said to be peaceful. Oral tradition suggests that it was the Marghi that first settled along the Mandara range and later on, they were followed by the Kamwe people. However, unlike the Marghi who claim Bornu as their first place of abode, the Kamwe simply claim that they are the autochthonous of the Mandara hills.

In summary therefore, what is certain is that when looking at the culture of the Kamwe people, the various stories of their origin and their migratory routes, it is safe to say that Gelmai the first ancestor of the Kamwe people left the Middle East like most tribes, most likely by 900 AD. He passed through Wudilee in Ethiopia sojourned in Gazaoua and Sheley (both in Cameroon), and eventually settled in his new abode in Nchokyili. Three of his children, namely: Tizhe, Zirra and Tumba are founders of Sukur, Sina and Ghye. From these three places, the various Kamwe dialects dispersed to their present geographical locations. This fact is supported by anthropological evidence and demography currently available in Kamweland as is evidenced in this seminar paper.

Endnotes

1. Interview with Baba Maduwa Bode, 103 years, Michika 2, 07/04/18
2. J. P. Dada, Z. M. Mangoro and J. J. Williams, *The Kamwe (Higi) People of Adamawa State*, Kaduna: Apani Publications, 2005, p.1.
3. *Ibid.*, p.9.
4. Interview with Baba Maduwa Bode, 103 years, Michika 2, 07/04/18
5. B. V. Z. Debki, *The History and Culture of Kamwe People*, Jos: Grace Publications, 2009, p. 4.
6. B. V. Z. Debki, *The History and Culture of Kamwe People...*, p. 15.
7. S. O. Onor, *The Ejagham Nation In The Cross River Region of Nigeria*, Ibadan: Kraft Books, 1994, p. 35.
8. S. O. Onor, *The Ejagham Nation In The Cross River Region...*, p. 36.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. S. O. Onor, *The Ejagham Nation In The Cross River Region...*, p. 37.
14. A. Obayemi, "The Yoruba and Edo speaking Peoples and their neighbours before 1600 ", J. F. A. Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa*, Vol. 1, London: Longman Publishers Ltd., 1971, P. 258.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. J. H. Greenberg, *The Languages of Africa*, Bloomington: Indiana University, 1970
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*
20. S. O. Onor, *The Ejagham Nation In The Cross River Region...*, p. 37.
21. This school of thought is derived from the views expressed by early British anthropologists who visited Africa in the early days of the colonial era. They conceived of most African nationalities as products of a common putative ancestor, lacking in the ability to interact with their neighbours, far and near.
22. S. O. Onor, *The Ejagham Nation In The Cross River Region...*, p. 38.
23. S. Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas*, Lagos: CMS, 1921, pp. 2-24.
24. C. C. Ifemesia, "States of the Central Sudan", J. F. A. Ajayi and I. Espie (eds.), *A Thousand years of West African History*, Ibadan: IUP, 1965, pp. 90-92
25. S. O. Onor, *The Ejagham Nation In The Cross River Region...*, p. 38.

26. *Ibid.*
27. Foremost Nigerian scholars who articulate this position include Alagoa and Erim
28. I. Y. Kwache, *Kamwe People of Northern Nigeria: Origin, History and Culture* (Vol.1). Kaduna: Prudent Universal Press Company, Ltd, 2016, p.1.
29. I. Y. Kwache, *Kamwe People of Northern Nigeria: Origin, History...*, p. 2.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*
34. I. Y. Kwache, *Kamwe People of Northern Nigeria: Origin, History...*, p. 3.
35. *Ibid.*
36. B. V. Z. Debki, *The History and Culture of Kamwe People...*, p. 4.
37. Genesis Chapter 11:1-9.
38. *Ibid.*
39. This observation also derived from field experience.
40. S. O. Onor, *The Ejagham Nation In The Cross River Region...*, p. 19.
41. *Ibid.*
42. Interview with Catechist Tsandukwa, 65 years, O. L. C. Bazza, 09/04/18.
43. *Ibid.*
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*
46. This was a consensus opinion among Kamwe the elders.
47. *Ibid.*
48. I. Y. Kwache, *Kamwe People of Northern Nigeria: Origin, History...*, p. 3.
49. *Ibid.*
50. Mai Idris Aloomo of Bornu, 1571-1583, p. 68.
51. I. Y. Kwache, *Kamwe People of Northern Nigeria: Origin, History...*, p. 41.
52. I. Y. Kwache, *Kamwe People of Northern Nigeria: Origin, History...*, p. 42.
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*
55. I. Y. Kwache, *Kamwe People of Northern Nigeria: Origin, History...*, p. 43.
56. *Ibid.*
57. *Ibid.*
58. Recollection from the teachings of my grandmother, Shi Wantwe'li.

59. B. V. Z. Debki, *The History and Culture of Kamwe People...*, p. 7.
60. Interview with Baba Maduwa Bode, 103 years, Michika 2, 07/04/18
61. *Ibid.*
62. B. V. Z. Debki, *The History and Culture of Kamwe People...*, p. 5.
63. *Ibid.*
64. *Ibid.*
65. I. Y. Kwache, *Kamwe People of Northern Nigeria: Origin, History...*, p. 40.
66. B. V. Z. Debki, *The History and Culture of Kamwe People...*, p. 7.
67. I had the unique privilege of visiting the Sukur heritage site at Madagali in Adamawa north in April, 2018 during my field work in Kamweland.
68. S. Ziradzo, *The Sociology of the Higgi People*, Jos: Matchers Publishing Ltd., 2009, p. 12.
69. *Ibid.*
70. *Ibid.*
71. S. Ziradzo, *The Sociology of the Higgi People...*, p. 13.
72. I. Y. Kwache, *Kamwe People of Northern Nigeria: Origin, History...*, p. 4.
73. *Ibid.*
74. I. Y. Kwache, *Kamwe People of Northern Nigeria: Origin, History...*, p. 5.
75. Sunday Daily Trust Newspapers, 7th July, 2013.
- Y. Kwache, *Kamwe People of Northern Nigeria: Origin, History...*, p. 11.